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ABSTRACT

The goal of England's Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) is to support early communication and literacy skills and to support parents as their children's first educators through both home- and group-based programs. The program is currently offered to children under 5 years of age and their families in a disadvantaged area of Oxford. This annual report details the partnership's major accomplishments for April 2001 through March 2002, a period spanning PEEP's seventh year. The report highlights progress and particular areas of development, including: (1) delivery in homes, groups, and settings; (2) developing video and audio versions of the 'Learning Together' materials; (3) on-the-ground collaboration with Sure Start program; and (4) Revalidation of Open College Networks parents' accreditation and PEEP evening training accreditation. The report also notes progress in information management, community collaboration, human resources, and the PEEP Research consortium. A draft financial report concludes the report. Appended are a description and rationale for PEEP, child development and family objectives of PEEP, and a summary report of the PEEP 2001 conference. (HTH)

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ED 467 176

PEEP ANNUAL REPORT

April 2001 – March 2002

PS 030556

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1. Director's overview

The main developments during the year have included:

- A new Business Plan
- Recruitment of senior staff
- Re-registration of Birkenhead PEEP for its second year
- New registration of Knowle West Sure Start PEEP (KEEP)
- Investors in People award
- PEEP as adult learning
- PEEP Early Start programmes
- Survey of national users' views of 'Learning Together' materials by volunteer parent
- Range of new audio and video recordings
- National conference

During the year forty-eight staff were employed, representing approximately twenty full-time-equivalent staff (see the organisation chart at Appendix ii).

Although capacity issues - both premises and staffing - have been problematic, Peers PEEP has continued to thrive, while National PEEP has taken off with the development of new training and the establishment of PEEP Learning Ltd as a successful company. The first registered PEEP programme, in Birkenhead, was successfully monitored and re-registered in January, with a very full and extremely interesting report. A second PEEP programme was registered, and an intensive workplan developed, in Knowle West in Bristol.

During the year funding was secured for the work planned until March 2003. A new PEEP Business Plan was completed in January 2002, reflecting the increasing range and complexity of the project. Incorporated into the new plan are two other plans: the PEEP Learning Ltd Business Plan, and the PEEP Fundraising Plan. There are three strands to this new fund-raising plan: the parents group, which will work not only to raise funds but also to help raise awareness of what PEEP does; accessing local sources of funding; and accessing national sources of funding.

Two years ago the post of Peers PEEP Director was created, ensuring that the local project continued strongly while national development got under way. During this year 2001–2002 it became clear that the overall management of PEEP needed to be separated from the management of its national development. In February the Trustees successfully recruited to two new posts: Peter Silva to the post of Chief Executive and Marilyn Ashley as National Director. These two - who take up post during the summer of 2002 - together with Anna Edwards as Director of Peers PEEP, will make up the new Senior Management Team.

In February the project was awarded Investors in People status. In her de-briefing, the assessor commented that, although PEEP was one of the

smallest organisations in her assessment experience, it was also one of the most complex, necessarily reflecting in her view the complex implications of its aim and objectives (raising educational attainment in the long term by working with parents, carers and other providers from birth to school).

In addition to the Investors in People report and the Birkenhead PEEP report, two others will be completed during June 2002. The first is a report on the running and outcomes of the PEEP/Early Start groups that ran from January to March. (In many of the Basic Skills Agency's Early Start programmes service providers drew on PEEP folders and videos for their sessions, and there was a special category of PEEP/Early Start programmes in Oxfordshire, Derby and the Wirral. The second is a detailed report resulting from a questionnaire survey of the views of national users of PEEP materials and training. This has been carried out by a volunteer parent as part of her Oxford Women's Training Scheme course. Finally in the autumn a third report commissioned by Peers PEEP in order to improve its products and services will be completed. This will be an evaluation of PEEP Link home visiting, and families' views of 'Learning Together' folders and videos.

With families in the Peers School area of Oxford PEEP has now developed and piloted a range of 'Learning Together' materials. Major tasks during this year were the production of CD recordings of the 'Learning Together' series of folders, together with a new series of six twenty-minute videos linking with the folders. The sixth, titled 'Feeling good about learning together', is about what PEEP can offer the adults – parents, carers and service providers – who use the programme. These materials are now beginning to be used in many other places.

Work has involved not only the development of materials, but also a focus on *how* the project works with families, especially the most vulnerable. The Access Project was begun in September 2002 with funding from the Basic Skills Agency, and will continue into the next year as part of PEEP's new work with the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Learning and Skills Council. In addition a great deal of national training development and piloting has taken place.

The Research Consortium continues to expand under the Chairmanship of Professor Kathy Sylva at the Oxford University Department of Educational Studies. In a variety of ways – including contributing to the development of the National Framework of Effective Practice to Support Children from Birth to Three - PEEP is advocating the importance of supporting families about their children's development at home from birth to school, especially in disadvantaged areas.

In July 2001 a successful conference was held at Church House Westminster, London, entitled 'Literacy – birth to school: new evidence, new practice, new policy?' (The Summary Report can be seen at Appendix v) Professor Christine Pascal concluded:

> "The key thing which ..... nearly every speaker touched upon ..... is that we can no longer go on ignoring the years from birth to school age; at a policy level, at a practice level or at a research level."

From January to March the Basic Skills Agency funded pilot Early Start groups, and a range of 'PEEP Early Start' groups ran in Oxfordshire, Derby and the Wirral. Drawing heavily on PEEP materials and experience, they were based mainly in nurseries, early excellence centres and family centres. Peers PEEP ran two Early Start groups of our own – a Saturday Dads' group and a babies group. All groups were a great success (a full report is available) and providers hope to see them running again very soon. The impact of the groups was potent - in raising the confidence of the parents as future learners and as active members of their communities. Significant outcomes included :

- groups of parents who in finding their own voice, felt confident to ask for courses and programmes for themselves
- the inclusion of parents who had not previously felt welcomed or able to access groups
- people working together in communities in new ways.

PEEP is essentially an *adult* learning programme *about* the youngest children. During the year an active partnership has developed both with the Basic Skills Agency, and the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Learning and Skills Council. Development work continues, with a particular focus in the coming year on the Access Project in Peers PEEP (initially funded by the Basic Skills Agency and in the coming year by the Learning and Skills Council) and on responding to the training and support needs that are emerging in the fast expanding national PEEP operation. This issue, relating both to quality control and to capacity, is particularly challenging.

PEEP's new Business Plan concludes:

> "A 'generation' project - within which today's babies become tomorrow's parents - relates to the kind of ground-breaking, tide-turning development that cannot bear fruit overnight, nor indeed within one or even two terms of government office. This longer-term and wide-ranging perspective is about family and community work that becomes part of the fabric of a neighbourhood from one generation to the next. It is about breaking cycles of deprivation and low expectations, about growing confidence, higher achievement and stronger communities, where families are supported in their neighbourhoods to value and nurture children as tomorrow's citizens. This is the perspective that inspires PEEP staff and volunteers, that drives PEEP development, and that is the rationale for PEEP funding".

2. Peers PEEP

2.1 An overview

Progress and particular areas of development this year have been as follows:

- Establishing PEEP Link as an integral part of Peers PEEP delivery
- Delivery in homes, groups and settings
- Information management and analysis
- Foundation PEEP progress including the further development of Foundation PEEP groups
- Developing video and audio versions of the 'Learning Together' material
- Early Start groups, including our first Saturday group
- Achievement of Investors In People
- On-the-ground collaboration with Sure Start
- Leaders taking Early Childhood Studies degree modules at Westminster College at Oxford Brookes University
- Revalidation of Open College Networks parents' accreditation and PEEP evening training accreditation

2.2 Information management

Considerable progress has been made in consolidating our data and information management system, which enables us to review and develop the programme and supply information to The Research Consortium. We are now able to produce a "reach to the community" analysis which shows the most complete picture for PEEP uptake we have ever had, integrating PEEP delivered in homes (Link), in groups, and in settings (playgroups and nursery classes). Analysis of reach in Foundation PEEP is particularly complex because of the variety of forms the delivery takes.

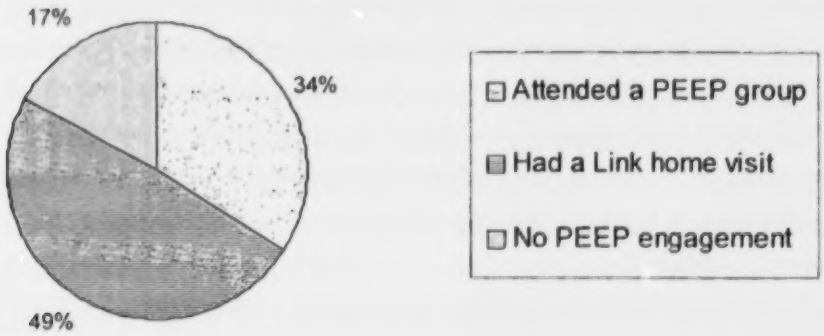
The charts below show how many children and their families who were eligible for Peers PEEP participated at different levels, in groups, through Link home visits or in settings, during the period April 2001 to March 2002. Please note that charts for levels One and Two include a complete year's birth cohort, whereas the Baby level chart includes only two terms' birth cohort.

Early PEEP – Overall Community Reach

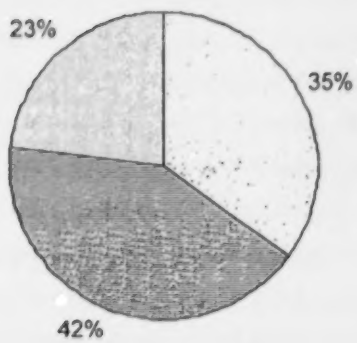
PEEP contact Summer 2001 - Spring 2002

These figures include all children known to PEEP, who live in the Peers PEEP catchment area (approximately 300 per year group).

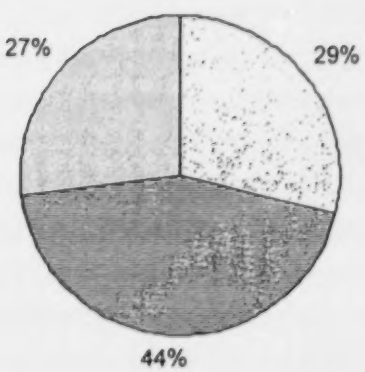
Baby level



Ones level



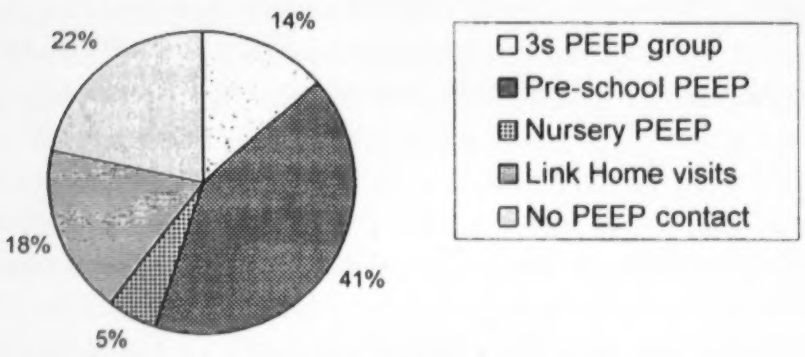
Twos level



Foundation PEEP – Overall Community Reach

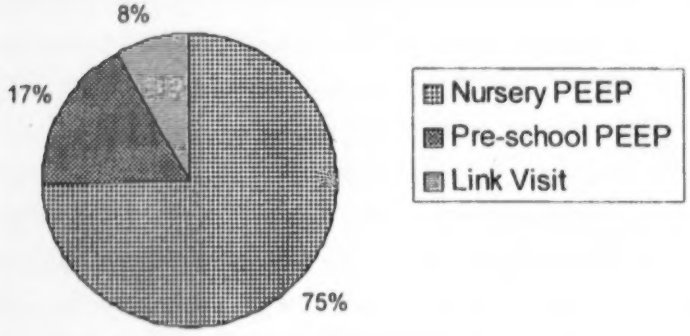
PEEP contact Summer 2001 – Spring 2002

Threes level



The Threes figures include all children known to PEEP, who live in our catchment area (approximately 300 per year group). (If children received more than one kind of PEEP contact during this period, they are shown in the category in which they had most contact.)

Contact in settings with Fours



At Fours level we contact children via settings in the Peers PEEP catchment area (Nurseries and Pre-schools, both of which take three-and four-year-olds). In a variety of ways, all four-year-olds in these settings receive *Learning Together with Fours* materials, so there is not a category of 'No PEEP engagement' as there is at other levels.

Points to note include:

- The strongest reach is achieved at Baby level and 4s level, with 83% of families with babies taking part and 100% of families with four-year-olds.
- Across the levels, the percentage of families who had no PEEP contact is 18%

We continue to have a rich diversity of families attending our groups and receiving Link visits. This year 31 different languages in addition to English were spoken by families attending our groups. We offer bi-lingual support in our home visits. From April 2001 to March 2002, 20% of the children who attended PEEP free-standing groups were from ethnic minority groups. Visits to the Asian community in the Sure Start area were undertaken jointly with the Sure Start Asian families support team.

2.3 OCN revalidation and fairs

We continued to hold Certificate Award Ceremonies each term, with 86 parents receiving an Open College Network Certificate during the year, and a further 5 receiving a Certificate for PEEP staff training. There was a particularly special autumn term ceremony which was held at the newly refurbished Jubilee Hall in Blackbird Leys, with activities organised by both parents and children. During the spring we were making the final video in the series of PEEP videos 'Feeling good about learning together', and the use in the film of the February ceremony highlights the relevance of accreditation in the process of supporting parents not only in relation to their children but for themselves.

Open College Networks accreditation comes up for re-validation every five years, and the opportunity to overhaul the way we offer it has meant that we shall now be able to make it available to other areas where PEEP is developing and accreditation is needed.

2.4 PEEP in homes (PEEP Link)

The Link home visiting programme is now firmly established as one of the main ways of accessing PEEP support. Parents of babies, ones, twos and threes are all welcoming their annual visit from a PEEP Leader. (Parents of fours receive their folder from their child's First School nursery class.) On a Link visit we deliver the year's 'Learning Together' materials to families, and undertake a practical activity to illustrate how they might be used. The visit is a chance to talk generally about opportunities for supporting children's learning.

Delivery staff have been supported to build up their skills and confidence in working within the home and have been trained to work with the PEEP curriculum in this new way. On average 200 Link home visits have taken place a term across levels 0-3. Our management structure and training have been enriched to support this challenging development.

A small team of volunteers drawn from families who attend PEEP groups has been delivering seasonal 'Learning Together' materials. They are working with us on new ways to support PEEP work with families who do not attend

groups. Volunteer parents also organised a very successful story-telling day at Borders Bookshop in central Oxford. This resulted in many families discovering the delights of a large bookshop such as Borders for the first time, and was much enjoyed by everyone who took part.

The fieldwork for the process evaluation of Link, undertaken by an independent consultant and supported by the PEEP Research Consortium, is nearing completion. We look forward to the final report in autumn 2002. Interim findings indicate that the majority of families interviewed found the visit positive and felt that it provided many useful ideas for supporting their children's learning. The interim dissemination of points raised through this interview process has been very useful to the Link team.

2.5 Community collaboration

We continue to be in regular contact with local community services. This enables us to provide up-to-date information to parents about local services and to support opportunities for targeted support where appropriate. We have continued to distribute our ever-developing range of 'Learning Together' materials and discuss how to use them collaboratively, with a wide range of local providers including: childminders, health workers, travellers advisory service, women's refuge, family centres and the pre-school counsellor service.

Practical collaboration with Rose Hill-Littlemore Sure Start has really taken root this year, supported by the addition of a termly meeting between the PEEP and Sure Start staff teams focusing on supporting each other's delivery of services to families. In addition our Recruitment and Community Co-ordinator is a member of the Sure Start team and all members of the Peers PEEP Management Team take part in Sure Start working groups. The Sure Start Director and the Peers PEEP Director meet regularly and the PEEP Recruitment and Community Co-ordinator is also part of the Sure Start Resarch Advisory Group.
Collaborative work with Rose Hill-Littlemore Sure Start in the period has also included:

- a "speaking and listening group", aiming to ensure that the work of all providers in the catchment area to support children's language is complementary
- joint planning of aspects of delivery staff training
- support to the Sure Start Early Start group
- mutual support in distribution of information to families

2.6 Early PEEP (Babies, Ones and Twos)

Six leaders have been doing the Early Childhood Studies degree modules at Oxford Brookes University this year. This has really enhanced practice and all have enjoyed the input, despite the levels of extra work.

Twenty-one groups ran on a weekly basis in this period, reducing to 19 in spring 2002. We are examining the birth rate and other data to understand this pattern of lower enrolment. Leaders have been working flexibly between leading groups and doing Link visits.

Attendance in these groups has remained good with on average 50% of families having high attendance (ie attending between 67-100% of sessions available). We are continuing to look at ways in which we support families attending groups and enable them to attend as much as possible.

We have opened a new baby group in the Sure Start Family Centre. The sessions take place in the playroom which runs an open session at that time. There have been some issues around running a group in this way but these challenges are easily outweighed by the benefits of reaching more families who we believe would not access PEEP otherwise.

The on-going level of national interest means a steady stream of visitors to groups, and this has occasionally become problematic, with some groups needing a break from visitors for a while.

We were delighted at the response from local families to help in the making of the 'Learning Together' videos. Over thirty families were involved in the final production of the videos, which are proving to be a very useful resource.

Work continues in developing the session plans which support the delivery of the programme in groups. The introduction of the 'Learning Together' folders and the videos has enabled us to develop new ideas about the ways in which we introduce ideas in the groups. We are constantly learning from those we work with and have been adapting and adjusting our practice accordingly.

Resources have been spent developing more play packs for families to borrow for use at home. We have concentrated on 1s and 2s levels which most needed development, having had very little since the original Small PEEP (for Ones and Twos together) was split to make two distinct levels. We are moving towards having more packs for these levels with a related book and toy. We have also looked at connecting ideas from the Learning Together series with a play activity in a pack. All of the packs have been chosen with the curriculum as a focus and we have introduced a coding system which enables leaders easily to identify these packs.

In the spring term we ran two 'PEEP Plus' groups with Early Start funding. These enrolled 24 adults with 29 children. 80% successfully completed the programme, which was based around the PEEP curriculum with additional and connected material that focused on adults' learning. The main emphasis for adults was on talking and listening skills, which dovetailed very well with the PEEP curriculum. As these groups are longer than the usual PEEP groups we were able to develop a range of different ideas and ways of approaching particular subjects. Whilst there was a very focused adults' talking time, we also found it very valuable to develop joint play sessions (adults and children together – often with a practical activity as a focus) in which we were able to respond to requests that we look at particular areas of children's learning in more detail. We had lots of fun exploring both adults' and children's play patterns through practical activities, with accompanying discussions and extracts from the videos. The resources provided by the Basic Skills Agency were enormously helpful.

2.7 Foundation PEEP (Threes and Fours)

The year has been one of consolidation for Foundation PEEP. Foundation groups continue to thrive, Link for threes is now established, we have increased the number of settings in which we work and the nursery teams have continued to develop strategies for working in partnership with parents.

The following figures show Nursery PEEP uptake for the Autumn Term September-December 2001:

- 98% of families received PEEP materials
- 40% of families attended a PEEP event or group one or more times
- 29% of families attended Circle Time one or more times
- 81% of families borrowed a playpack or book one or more times
- Total number of parental contacts was 2519

Strategies used included the following:

- Informal conversations with parents
- Telephone conversations
- Formal meetings
- Home visits
- PEEP events
- Workshops and parents' groups
- Open days for new families
- Circle Times
- Borrowing
- Visiting speakers
- Visits with families
- Visits to pre-schools
- Written communications

Much of our focus has been on establishing systems (management, delivery and data-collection) which allow for a more effective delivery of the PEEP curriculum. Entering Foundation data onto the Peers PEEP database will enhance our review and planning processes in the future. We have also amended Foundation session plans so that not only do they relate to the materials but they also incorporate the new OCN learning objectives and assessment criteria. Time has also been devoted to resource work and as a consequence we have considerably built up our stocks of library books and playpacks. Link home visits have gone well with encouraging responses from parents. Identification of families eligible for a visit will be facilitated by having Foundation information on the database.

We have run four free-standing Foundation groups this year, three in the Sure Start area and one in the Leys. Attendance continues to be strong, although uptake by families with four-year-olds remains low (most four-year-olds are in nursery classes). We continue to seek ways to widen access to Foundation groups, and one of our groups is about to move to the playroom of the Sure

Start Family Centre and will run during a public session, a strategy that has been successful for a baby level group.

Having extended our reach this year by establishing a session in Little Blackbirds Pre-school in Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, we now offer PEEP at seven sessions of five pre-schools and playgroups. We have provided materials to every family with a child at each of these pre-school/playgroups. The setting staff have been extremely supportive in what has been a challenging task, given the number of children. Supervisors provide the materials to new families when they visit. The PEEP Leaders have supported the Supervisors in this role, which strengthens the perception of PEEP by parents as an integral part of the pre-school/setting.

Attendance by families at circle time across all the pre-school/playgroups remains low but borrowing remains strong. It is hoped that the increased involvement of the Supervisors and the creation of additional folder pages relating directly to individual settings will lead to more parental engagement.

A team of PEEP Nursery Support Teachers and Assistants has continued to support two sessions a week in each of the eight nursery classes in the HOSP EAZ area. The challenge remains of engaging with nursery parents sufficiently to make a difference at home. Each nursery has developed different ways of achieving this, some offering parents a vibrant programme of family events and workshops in the nursery, others preferring the one-to-one approach. The nursery staff teams continue to be successful in their delivery of PEEP materials, with 100% of families receiving them - with a significant conversation between staff and parent/carer - across all eight nurseries.

Systems have been put in place this year to increase support to the PEEP Nursery Support Teachers. A cycle of three-weekly team meetings has been established and each teacher receives a monitoring visit once a term with a review meeting at the end of term. Additional support has also been established for the assistants via an induction visit to the PEEP Centre followed by one-to-one training from the Nursery Assistants Co-ordinator, particularly around resource work.

2.8 Peers PEEP training

2.8.1 Delivery staff training

This year, the majority of the key delivery staff have taken up the opportunity to take a module of the Early Childhood Studies degree at Oxford Brookes University. There has also been a range of in-house training, including:

- a session for all delivery staff about Sure Start in general and Rose Hill-Littlemore Sure Start in particular
- training around our revalidated OCN requirements and practice – this is an area we shall need to keep thinking about in relation to the accessibility of our programme and the support and development opportunities for PEEP parents.

- an audit and review of our additional needs and internal child protection policies which included training for delivery staff, with the aim of maximising the opportunities for offering sensitive support to families.
- a termly session for all delivery staff about that term's curriculum, at all levels. This has proved very productive, enabling us to appreciate the links and connections between levels and between the different modes of delivery we use now, in what is - after all - a spiral curriculum. It also helps delivery staff think about how to make the most of the ever-increasing range of 'Learning Together' materials.

2.8.2 Centre Training

The Centre Training Group took the lead in putting PEEP forward for the Investors in People Standard. Rather than going for an initial diagnosis and action plan we decided to go straight for assessment and were pleased to find that our practices were already sound enough to meet the Standard. There is of course more work to be done in developing our practices and maintaining standards, but it was very reassuring to know that what we have already is a very sound basis.

As the project grows, so does the need to support management skills. The internal Management Development Programme has been much appreciated by those with management responsibilities and has offered sessions about time management, supervision and appraisals. The Centre Training Group has also focused on meeting IT training needs of staff in the project, offering more peer support with one to one coaching sessions.

3. National PEEP

A great deal of researching, planning and development has taken place during the year in relation to National PEEP. Facilitated by support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, a Business Plan for PEEP was written. This has at Appendix 6 a Business Plan for the separate company, PEEP Learning Ltd. (PLL), a registered company limited by guarantee. It was necessary to set up PLL as the mechanism for selling PEEP's 'Learning Together' materials and training.

In the first trading period covering the eighteen months to the end of March 2002, PEEP Learning Ltd made a net profit of just under £48,000, ensuring that the company will remain sustainable over the next year as its set-up grant expires and its management becomes self-sustaining. This strong position indicates a higher-than-anticipated level of take-up for PEEP products and services at this early stage.

PEEP materials (described below), information events and training have been made available as widely as possible through PEEP Learning Ltd (including the website), in order to disseminate PEEP to practitioners wanting to use PEEP in their work. The 'Learning Together' series and accompanying training have been designed particularly for service providers in

disadvantaged areas. Although quality *control* is not a feature of this kind of dissemination, purchasers of 'Learning Together' materials are strongly advised to take up the two-day 'Getting Started with PEEP' training. This ensures that they understand the materials and make the most of them, and can plan how they will use them most appropriately in their own areas.

Sure Start programmes have become one of the main contexts for PEEP development, and a table mapping the PEEP programme onto the Sure Start objectives can be seen at Appendix iv. An extension of Peers PEEP's role in Rose Hill-Littlemore Sure Start (within the PEEP catchment area) is the likelihood of using PEEP in a second Oxfordshire Sure Start programme in Abingdon. This has been under discussion, with the possibility of training days during the autumn.

The remaining sections of this National PEEP report cover 'Learning Together' information services, national training, replication and PEEP Learning Ltd.

3.1 Products and services
These currently consist of 'Learning Together' publications, information services, and training.

3.1.1 'Learning Together' materials
There are five folders in the series, for Babies, Ones, Twos, Threes and Fours. These are all photocopiable materials. For the period April 2001 to March 2002, the following folders have been sold for national development:

Babies folders	559
Ones folders	308
Twos folders	275
Threes folders	218
Fours folders	149

Songs and Rhymes cassettes and accompanying Song Books for each level are part of the folders but can also be sold separately.

Audio versions on CD of the 'Learning Together' folders (like 'talking books') for Babies, Ones, Twos, and Threes are now also available, with Fours to be ready shortly. These are distributed as part of the folders, in the plastic pocket at the front.

A series of 20-minute video versions of the five folders have also been produced.
The last two to be made were the Fours level, and an additional video entitled 'Feeling Good about Learning Together' showing adults' perspectives on their PEEP involvement. The original PEEP video 'Beginning with PEEP', made in 1997, continues to be available.

The Babies and Threes videos have been available from January 2002, and the Ones and Twos from May 2002. Sales of the videos have been as follows:

Beginning with PEEP	133
Babies videos	576
Ones videos	405
Twos videos	406
Threes videos	537
Fours videos	Available June 2002
Adults videos	Available June 2002

3.1.2 'Making the Most of PEEP'
'Making the Most of PEEP' (usually referred to as the The Big Book) is a handbook for practitioners. The Big Book comes in two parts: Part A Doing PEEP, and Part B The 'Learning Together' folder material. (While the folders have been designed to be photocopiable, this is not the case for either the Big Book or the Song Books.)

3.1.3 Additional items available from PEEP Learning Ltd
These include the following:

- 'PEEP Voices' – a five-year diary of project development 1995-2000
- Welcome card and lullaby tape for newborns
- 5 birthday cards from the first to the fifth birthday

3.2 Information services

3.2.1 The PEEP website
The website has been a very exciting and positive development, and has generated a lot of interest. It has been structured into three main sections: for parents, for practitioners and for researchers. But although we know that materials, training and further contact have been requested as a result, we are concerned about our current lack of capacity either to manage or to develop the site in appropriate ways.

3.2.2 Visitors' Days
Seven Visitors' Days have been held this year, all fully booked to take the maximum of 12 visitors. This is approximately the maximum number that the project would want to offer, as the days involve input from several Peers PEEP staff as well as visits to groups, and more would be too disruptive to the local programme, especially given that further one-off visits are inevitably necessary on occasion. The number constraint per day is dictated by the group visits which are part of the day. The possibility of replacing visits to actual groups with video footage of groups has been investigated as it would enable us to take more Visitors, but the group visits are thought to be such a vital part of Visitors' Day that it is not being pursued, at least for the moment.

3.2.3 Information Days
Following a major mailing to all Sure Start programmes we held two 'Introducing PEEP' roadshow-type days between January and March. The

people who came represented a wide variety of Sure Start programmes: in the Midlands (Manchester, 40 people); and in the London area (Slough, 20 people). We were also invited by West Lothian Council to hold an Information Day in Scotland, to which160 people came including delegates from Orkney and Shetland.

3.2.4 London conference: *'Literacy – birth to school: new evidence, new practice, new policy?'*
A summary report of this conference can be seen at Appendix v.

3.2.5 Conference presentations, workshops, seminars and working groups
Contributions were made to a range of events including:

- Royal Institution conference ('The development of the brain and early learning') presentation
- Nottingham EYDCP Conference workshop
- National Birth to Threes Framework working group meetings
- Oxfordshire Birth to Threes Task Group meetings
- Warwick Conference ('Sharing research in early childhood') presentation
- Oxfordshire Family Learning Conference workshop
- Early Years PGCE course at Oxford Brookes University

3.3 National training

The following training was developed and delivered:

3.3.1 'Getting Started With PEEP' 2-day course
This ran five times in Oxford, with 10-12 people on each occasion. It also ran four times in other places: Birkenhead (40), Bristol (40), Derby (40) and Wakefield (24). Throughout the year it was continuously evaluated and adjusted. It is one of the most challenging aspects of national work, as well as one of the most important. The delegates on the courses were mainly Sure Start workers from statutory and voluntary services, bringing with them a complex mixture of needs and experience. There were also health workers, school heads and teachers and people from the private sector. Each group of trainees has been entirely different.

3.3.2 PEEP HE-level Certificate
In the Birkenhead registered programme area, the first two modules of the HE-level PEEP Certificate training are now completed. Module One (2+2 days) is called 'Doing PEEP' and Module Two (also 2+2 days) is 'Theory to Practice'. In Bristol the first two days of Module One were delivered, with an intensive programme of six days to complete the two modules in place for summer 2002.

3.4 Replication

3.4.1 One of the central issues of dissemination relates to quality control. PEEP's national dissemination has been planned to include replication (a kind of franchising of PEEP, with other registered PEEP projects) as a quality-controlled element of 'roll-out'. This has presented many challenges (for

instance ensuring potential replicating areas are really made aware of what PEEP is and does and that all the potential service providers can commit to it). There have also been the challenges of working together at distances such as Oxford to Birkenhead.

It has been important to find out what the priorities and challenges are in the process of replication, and how it can best be done – and to be sure that PEEP has the required capacity. So in this second phase of PEEP in 2000-2005, replication has been planned as a pilot project, with probably one additional project per year. This pilot project is crucially a case of quality not quantity. By 2005 - all being well - there will be enough PEEP projects around the UK which, as they develop, could perhaps act as 'PEEP Centres' to support continuing PEEP developments in their area. Meanwhile we are finding out 'what it takes' to establish PEEP in other areas, with outcomes comparable to Peers PEEP.

With two programmes registered as planned and requiring considerable capacity in terms of training and support, and with the development of a high level of interest in both Wales and Scotland that will need additional capacity, Trustees and staff recently decided that major efforts to recruit a third registered programme should not be made at this stage. The focus will be to consolidate existing new work and to focus on the development of possible alternative models to meet the needs of providers in Wales and Scotland. It was felt that this strategy would help to safeguard quality and that more would be learned as a result.

In the contract between PEEP and a registering organisation, the agreements are broadly as follows.

Services to be provided by PEEP:
Following payment of a Registration Fee which covers:

- Use of the title PEEP, and acknowledgement of the registering programme as incorporating a PEEP Project
- Basic telephone/e-mail advice as needed
- Development and termly review of a Work Plan for delivery of the service
- Annual monitoring of the implementation of the service based on the PEEP Quality Framework

PEEP agrees to

- Develop with the registering programme a jointly agreed Work Plan based on the attached quality framework including a Training Plan
- Adhere to the Work Plan, agreeing with the registering programme as soon as possible if adjustments need to be made
- Provide telephone/e-mail advice as required
- Provide further support and consultancy if requested by the registering programme at the consultancy rate detailed in the Financial Plan, subject to PEEP capacity
- Provide training as detailed in the Training Plan and Work Plan
- Supply PEEP publications as required by the Work/Training Plan

- Provide other activities/services covered by the Registration Fee as detailed above

The registering organisation agrees to

- Develop with PEEP Learning Limited a jointly agreed Work Plan based on the quality framework (attached) which includes a Training Plan
- Adhere to the Work/Training Plan informing PEEP Learning Limited as soon as possible if adjustments need to be made
- Offer a universally accessible, free PEEP Programme at 4 levels from birth to three years within the quality of the framework, working towards involvement of all families
- Encourage and facilitate provision of 'PEEP for Fours' in the Primary Schools in area of the registering programme
- Liaise/meet with PEEP before the start of each term for the purpose of sharing progress, updating the Work Plan and accessing support
- Appoint a co-ordinator for PEEP who will work with the team of core workers in managing and supporting delivery of the registering programme
- Monitor the implementation and progress of the registering programme at quarterly and annual intervals

After a year, the monitoring visit and review precedes renewal of registration, so that organisations can decide whether they wish to remain registered. At the same time PEEP can assess whether their work within the framework is appropriate for re-registration. This needs to include a core group of the staff holding or working towards the PEEP HE-level Certificate.

3.4.2 Registered programmes

Meanwhile, Birkenhead Sure Start have the first registered PEEP programme – Birkenhead PEEP. Groups opened in September 2001 and are going very well, with staff happy to talk to other potential PEEP providers. The first monitoring visit was in January, the workplan is in place, and a full report of the first year has been written, structured around the Quality Framework.

The second registered PEEP project is KEEP, part of Knowle West Sure Start. KEEP was ready to open PEEP groups by April 2002, having worked with national PEEP through the previous year to reach this point.

These programmes are both different from Peers PEEP, and from each other. They are also in contact with each other, and Bristol staff have visited Birkenhead PEEP as part of their planning. By contrast with Peers PEEP (which is constrained to some degree by its development history), both the Sure Start programmes - especially Bristol Knowle West - are developing their PEEP delivery in a deliberately interagency way. PEEP is seen as the co-ordinating element of the Sure Start programmes, and in KEEP a wide range of local service providers (health visitors, speech therapists, teachers, librarians and so on) have attended 'Getting Started with PEEP' training and will be involved in delivering PEEP, employed both by Sure Start and by other agencies.

3.5 Relationship with PEEP Learning Ltd (PLL)

PEEP Learning Ltd., a separate company, now has a Board of Directors with a Chairman, and a Business Plan.

The aims of PLL are:

- To provide a self-sustaining mechanism for dissemination and replication of PEEP
- After covering costs, to contribute to PEEP's research and development funding

Components of the Business Plan are 1. Market description; 2. Product descriptions; 3. SWOT analysis; 4. Growth plan; 5. Action plan; 6. Contingency plans.

The profit/loss account for the first 18-month period of the company ending March 2002 shows a net profit of approximately £45,000.

4. Resources

4.1 Human resources

The number of staff employed by PEEP in March 2002 was 35 with an additional 13 employed through the LEA. In total these 48 staff represent approximately 20 full-time-equivalent staff. During the year, four new staff joined PEEP, and four new members joined the nursery team replacing leavers.

Following the National Director's resignation with effect from end August 2002, a review of Director roles took place. This resulted in the creation of two new posts to replace the current Director: a Chief Executive and a National Director. In February appointments were made to these posts, to start in April and July 2002.

Other areas of HR work during the year included:

- Implementation of a PEEP Stakeholder Pension scheme
- Review of delivery staff's hours
- Investors in People assessment leading to the IIP award
- Recruitment of volunteers for Link delivery
- Development of policies and procedures regarding volunteers
- Sorting of manual records to meet new Data Protection requirements
- Continuation of in-house management development programme

4.2 Premises

Currently PEEP operates from three separate places on the Peers School campus: the PEEP Centre (mainly for Peers PEEP), the PEEP Cabins (mainly for National PEEP and training) and the old PEEP Office (used as a stockroom and despatch point by PEEP Learning Ltd). This year PEEP has with the Leys Community Development Initiative shared office space in the newly renovated Jubilee Centre at the far end of Blackbird Leys, for which rent is paid to Oxford City Council. PEEP groups run in this building and in every other available and appropriate space across the area, for instance family centres, church hall, health clinic, community centres, schools etc. This strategy enables the project to deliver its undertaking to provide a right-age-group place within buggy-pushing distance from home, for every child and family from birth to school who would like one.

4.2.1 Short-term situation

Over-crowding is a major challenge in the Centre in spite of very careful use of available space. Currently 48 staff (20 full-time equivalent) are accommodated in 250 sq metres which results in a range of practical problems and raises health and safety issues.

4.2.2 Medium-term prospects

We are due to lose occupancy of the old PEEP office (due for demolition in July 2003) and will need to locate replacement space for PEEP Learning Ltd

operations. In addition it is clearly vital to improve work conditions in the PEEP Centre by finding some way of relieving the pressure on space.

4.2.3 Long-term needs

It would be enormously helpful to bring the various PEEP operations together in one place. Early discussions with staff about this have resulted in a vision of a major new permanent centre incorporating PEEP-managed day-care provision. Such a centre would go a long way to underpin and facilitate PEEP's further development in forthcoming years.

5. PEEP Research Consortium

5.1 PEEP Research Consortium

Chaired by Professor Kathy Sylva, this Consortium reports to the PEEP Trustees. We are extremely grateful to Professor Sylva for her generous continuation in this role, and the great knowledge and experience that she brings to it. The Consortium continues to meet once a month, to receive reports from the various studies, to discuss common issues and to act as a support group for the researchers.

PEEP Research Consortium Projects

Title of project	Age range studied	Principal Investigators	Source of funding	Duration
Foundation PEEP Study	3 – 4 years	Dr Maria Evangelou	ESRC / DfES	1997-2001
Birth to School Study	0-5 years	Prof Greg Brooks	DfES	1998-2004
The 'Oxford Arm' of the Birth to School Study	0-5 years	Dr Maria Evangelou Prof Richard Pring	DfES / PEEP	2001-2004
PEEP Link Evaluation	0-5 years	Jill Head	Basic Skills Agency	2001-2002
Enabling Parents: The impact of PEEP on parental skills and training/employment	Parents of 4 year-old children	Prof Kathy Sylva Dr Maria Evangelou Prof Greg Brooks	Learning & Skills Council (Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire)	2002-2003

5.2 Foundation PEEP Study results

Dr Maria Evangelou's Foundation PEEP study (PEEP for Threes) has shown significant benefits of participation in PEEP. The positive outcomes in children's development were found for: verbal comprehension, vocabulary, writing, concepts about print, phonological awareness, early number concepts, and self esteem in relation to 'acceptance' by the mother. The DfES-funded second part of the study (PEEP for Fours) and the final Foundation Study Report will be available shortly following ministerial approval.

5.3 Birth to School Study developments

Still under the experienced direction of Professor Greg Brooks at Sheffield University, the Birth to School Study is now considerably strengthened by additional DfES funding for Dr Maria Evangelou's role as local deputy-director, and for additional fieldworker time. Reports of the analyses of the birth data and the first birthday data will be available shortly.

5.4 Formative evaluations

A formative evaluation of PEEP Link including the new publications, and of the 'Learning Together' videos, how they are received by families and their impact on project involvement, is being carried out. An early task in the Access project will be to evaluate the Early Start 'PEEP Plus' groups.

In addition there are a variety of smaller research projects related to PEEP. These are usually reported informally to the Consortium, which guides and advises wherever appropriate.

5.5 Enabling Parents Study

Funding for this study was granted by the Learning and Skills Council in March 2002, and the project will be directed by Professor Kathy Sylva and Dr Maria Evangelou at the Oxford University Department for Educational Studies.

The research questions of this study are:

- What does PEEP contribute to parents' ability to communicate with their children, and their understanding of their development?
- Does PEEP enhance adults' skills as parents?
- Does PEEP increase parents' confidence and skills in talking about their children with other adults, especially adults in early childhood settings?
- How does participation in PEEP affect the ways adults view their "personal powers" and their feelings of control over their personal environments?

The study aims to investigate these adult outcomes that parents and providers say are the results of engaging in PEEP.

6. Income and expenditure

DRAFT – SUBJECT TO AUDIT

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2002

Incoming resources	Notes	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds 2000-01
		£	£	£	£
Grants receivable	2	390,751	380,757	771,508	
Interest receivable			6,468	6,468	
Total incoming resources		390,751	387,225	777,976	707,828
Resources expended					
Direct charitable expenditure	2	390,751	302018	692,769	651,391
Fundrasing and publicity			15756	15,756	4,142
Management and administration			57,232	57,232	50,565
Total resources expended		390,751	375,006	765,757	706,098
Net outgoing/incoming resources for the year	-	0	12,219	12,219	1,730
Balances brought forward		277	199,223	199,500	197,770
Balances carried forward		277	211,442	211,719	199,500

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Notes to the accounts – 31 March 2002

2 Incoming Resources	**2001/2**
	£
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	220,000
Hamilton Trust	50,000
Sure Start - Rose Hill / Littlemore	97,984
Lloyds TSB Foundation	0
NIACE	0
Home Office	41,854
Garfield Weston Foundation	0
Basic Skills Agency	216,330
Hamilton Oxford Schools Partnership (EAZ)	14,583
MKOB Learning & Skills Council	47,000
DfES	78,125
Maretta Grace School of Dance	2,355
National Childrens Bureau	3,006
Bank Interest	6,468
Donations Received	103
Visitors Days	0
Video Sales	15
Books	153
	777,976
Resources Expended	**£**
Staff costs	377,140
Centre running costs	54,124
Meetings	21
Staff development	8,354
Group running costs	9,641
Publications	15,334
Group resources	7,104
Home visiting costs	1,374
Information Management	3,347
Programme resources development	216,330
	692,769
Fundraising & publicity	**15,756**
Management and administration	**57,232**
Net Incoming Resources	**12,219**

Peers Early Education Partnership
Balance Sheet

	2001/2 £	2000/01 £
Current Assets		
Debtors	90,543	-
Cash at bank and in hand	180,651	216,083
Cash		
	271,194	216,083
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	59,475	16,583
Net Current Assets	**211,719**	199,500
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	**211,719**	199,500

Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP)

This paper briefly describes PEEP's background and rationale; its current operations; its quality framework and intended learning outcomes; its progress so far; and its vision of future government policy for family learning from birth.

1. Background and rationale

Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) was set up in 1995. It is an early learning intervention which aims to improve the life chances of children in disadvantaged areas. Its purpose is to raise educational attainment, especially literacy, by supporting parents and carers in their role as first educators, giving their children a flying start at school. PEEP works *with* adults, *about* their children's very early learning.

Research studies have shown that "early childhood programmes are more likely to succeed where there is effective parental involvement ..... the idea of parent-professional partnership based on mutual respect and a shared purpose" (Ball, 1994). PEEP has built on these findings to develop a unique five year programme of support for parents and carers for the period from a child's birth to school entry - an affordable, transferable, evidence-based model designed to support all families with young children in disadvantaged communities, complementing pre-school and school provision. Associated benefits relate to social inclusion and to parents' own confidence, basic skills and lifelong learning.

2. Current operations

Peers PEEP is the original project, located in a peripheral estate of Oxford (Blackbird Leys and surrounding areas, with 2000 children under five years). From birth to school it offers materials and support to parents, carers and practitioners in homes, groups (currently over 30 in the area each week) and settings. Materials include folders, song tapes and books, CD and video versions of the folders, and a wide range of books and playpacks for borrowing. The focus is on everyday life at home - listening, talking, playing and singing together, and sharing books every day; aiming to lay solid foundations for later learning, especially literacy.

Peers PEEP was involved in helping to set up one of the government's new Sure Start programmes, Rose Hill-Littlemore Sure Start, and now works within it, concentrating currently on developing strategies for reaching and working with the most vulnerable families.

Parents are offered the Open College Network (OCN) award, which helps them to make the most of PEEP and builds confidence to access other courses and to plan for returning to work, especially as their children enter school. Four hundred and seventy-seven OCN certificates have been awarded to PEEP parents and carers for 'Learning Together at Home' since the system started in 1997. Thirty-six OCN

certificates for PEEP (staff) Training have also been awarded to parents. The PEEP Access project aims to extend vulnerable families' participation in PEEP; and acts as a Learning Bridge, collaborating with adult learning providers and ensuring that parents are offered appropriate information and support for their own learning. A Higher Education level 'PEEP Leader Certificate' is currently being developed. This will represent a route into Higher Education for a range of people including local parents and carers with an interest in training to work with the youngest children in care and education.

National development of PEEP is moving very fast. Sure Start programmes, Early Excellence Centres, Early Start and Bookstart projects and others are now using PEEP to augment their work, and Foundation PEEP (for 3s and 4s) has been developed to offer support in a range of pre-school settings as well as in PEEP groups and at home. PEEP's 'Learning Together' programme is now happening in many homes, groups and settings across the UK and further afield.

The 'Learning Together' publications from PEEP are designed for PEEP's five levels: Babies, Ones, Twos, Threes and Fours. They include folders, song-books and tapes, CDs and videos. There is also a PEEP Handbook called 'Making the Most of PEEP' and a record of the first five years of project development called 'PEEP Voices'. Information about obtaining all of these, together with details of the training for using 'Learning Together', is available from PEEP Learning Ltd. at the address below.

There are now two other registered PEEP programmes, in Birkenhead and in Knowle West, Bristol. These have been developing in a similar way to Peers PEEP in Oxford, working to the same quality framework and with enthusiastic take-up by local families. Two other areas of major development are Scotland and Wales, where there has also been wide interest in PEEP.

3. Quality framework

i) Explicit aims and objectives, shared with all concerned as the basis of work
ii) A focus on valuing diversity and on unconditional acceptance and self-esteem
iii) Flexible delivery of a developmentally and culturally appropriate programme
iv) Universal, voluntary and free access for families in PEEP areas
v) A collaborative community programme working in partnership with parents and service providers
vi) A reflective learning organisation – children, parents/carers and staff – based on building positive learning dispositions, with self-evaluation strategies
vii) High quality staff managed on 'Investors in People' (IIP) principles, aiming for diversity and local community recruitment
viii) High quality resources for families and for staff
ix) Systematic monitoring and information management underpinning development
x) Effectiveness, efficiency, value for money

4. Intended learning outcomes

In relation to long-term outcomes, the focus is on developing the following characteristics, dispositions and abilities of children well before they begin Key Stage 1:

i) feeling good about themselves
ii) listening carefully
iii) talking about their thoughts and feelings
iv) knowing many stories, songs and rhymes
v) having a good vocabulary
vi) recognising their own written name
vii) recognising numbers and letters, and knowing both letter names and letter sounds
viii) knowing about the different reasons for reading and for writing
ix) wanting to learn how to read and write

It is these characteristics, dispositions and abilities that are associated with long-term gains in educational achievement, especially in literacy.

5. Progress

Does PEEP make a difference? There is a growing body of anecdotal qualitative evidence showing that it positively impacts both on babies' and young children's development, and on their parents' and carers' role as first educators. The story of PEEP's first five years with a chapter containing samples of this evidence - called 'PEEP Voices' - is now available. The PEEP Research Consortium, chaired by Professor Kathy Sylva, co-ordinates all studies of PEEP. In order to ensure an objective account of the programme and quantitative evidence of outcomes, three studies have been set up. A comparative 'Birth to School' study with approximately 500 children, originally developed at The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), began in 1998 and will report finally in 2005. A smaller comparative study, of Foundation PEEP (for Threes and Fours), developed in the Oxford University Department for Educational Studies and directed by Professor Kathy Sylva, has reported that PEEP for Threes led to significant gains in progress in verbal comprehension, vocabulary, concepts about print, phonological awareness, writing, early number concepts and self-esteem. The whole Foundation PEEP study will be published shortly. Both are comparative studies funded by the DfES. A third comparative study, of adult outcomes, has also been set up. Titled 'Enabling Parents', it will be directed by Professor Kathy Sylva, and is due to report in 2004.

The purpose of the first phase of PEEP (1995 – 2000) was to develop and pilot a new way of working with parents and carers of children from birth to school, to raise educational attainment, especially literacy. This second phase of PEEP (2000 – 2005) is a bridging phase between initial development and mainstream funding. Building on the first phase, it aims to make the most of PEEP so far and continues the process of developing and researching this new way of raising literacy levels in the long term. Phase Two incorporates the added dimensions of working with Sure Start, disseminating widely, completing the research studies and testing replication in two other Sure Start areas, Birkenhead and Bristol Knowle West.

6. Vision of future government policy for family learning from birth

Whether PEEP continues into a third phase in 2005 and beyond will depend initially on funding. The project now needs core funding for 2003 onwards, in order to continue developing the programme in its original area. This process of development generates the training and support programmes for children and families in other areas. Continuation into a third phase will also depend on the success of this 'roll-out' process from now on, on research outcomes, and on government policy decisions. The House of Commons Select Committee Report on Early Years begins

by including children from birth to three years in its remit, and makes important recommendations which recognise the crucial role that parents play in their children's learning. In the government's Green Paper, "Schools: building on success", PEEP is given as an example of the kind of work on which the government intends to build, using recent research which highlights "the very strong link between the shared reading and literacy activities of parent and child and later attainment".

PEEP's vision is of a new government policy for family learning which capitalises on the relationship - evident in PEEP's work - between the areas of early learning and child development, mental health, adults' confidence and competence, and neighbourhood renewal. A new 'building block' is needed at the very start of an education system that would begin at birth instead of at three years. While acknowledging the vitally important role of out-of-home education and care, the main mechanism of this building block would be *adult* learning, focusing on support for parents and carers of children from birth to three years at home. This is the role of Early PEEP. It would underpin the existing Foundation Stage for 3s – 6s which is the context for the other half of PEEP's work with parents and carers, Foundation PEEP. This building block would enrich the lives of young children and families: their positive emotional and social development and their learning dispositions, their mental health; parents' and carers' skills and confidence, and active neighbourhood support networks. At the same time it would lay firm foundations - in the all-important years from birth - for life-long learning, mental health and citizenship.

References

Ball, C. (1994) *Start Right: The Importance of Early Learning* London, RSA p.121

(2001) *House of Commons Select Committee Report on Early Years* The Stationery Office, London

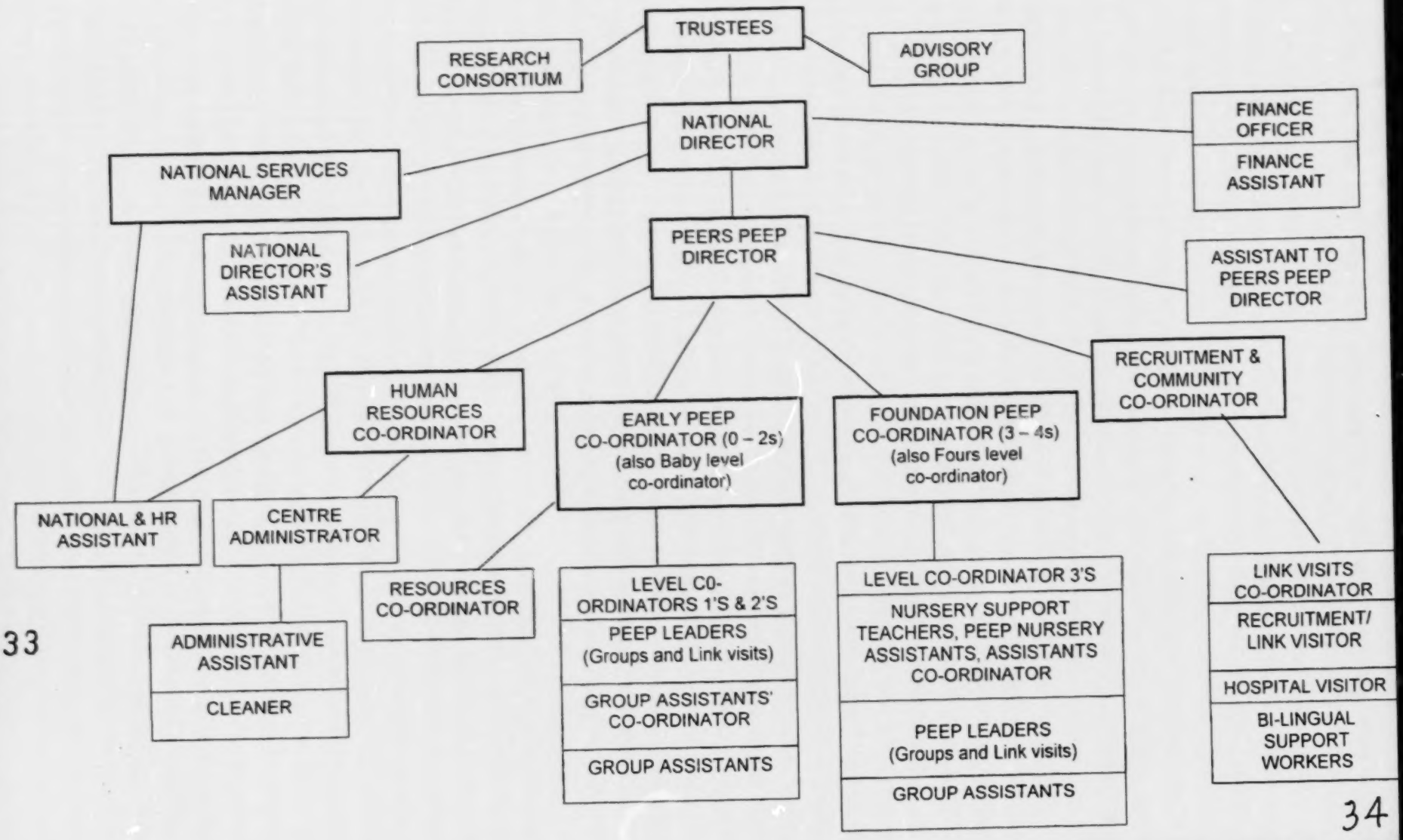
DfEE (2001) "Schools: building on success" The Stationery Office, London

July 2002

APPENDIX II

PEEP ORGANISATION
MARCH 2002

NB This will alter in September 2002



PEEP Trustees, PEEP Management Team, and PEEP Advisory Group 2001-2002

PEEP TRUSTEES

Sir Colin McColl: *Retired senior civil servant*
Michael O'Regan: *Businessman and school governor*
Rosemary Peacocke: *Formerly HM Staff Inspector for the Early Years*
Ken Brooks: *Lawyer*
Bernard Clarke: *Secondary school headteacher*
Chris Dark: *Peers Upper School headteacher*

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Rosemary Roberts MA OBE: *National PEEP Director*
Dr Anna Edwards: *Peers PEEP Director*
Vicki Cullen: *Foundation PEEP Delivery Co-ordinator*
Michèle Healey: *0s-2s Programme Delivery Co-ordinator*
Deidre Macfarlane: *Recruitment and Community Co-ordinator*
Janet Sly: *Human Resources Co-ordinator*

In addition, PEEP has the benefit of regular advice from its Advisory Group which includes the following people:

Professor Ronald Arnold: *Formerly HM Staff Inspector for Teacher Training; Secretary to the Bullock Committee; consultant to the National Foundation for Educational Research*

Professor Greg Brooks: *University of Sheffield*

Julie Fisher: *Schools Adviser (Early Years Specialist), Oxfordshire LEA*

Professor Philip Gammage: *Professor of Early Childhood Research, de Lissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies, University of South Australia*

Jill Head: *Primary Inspector*

Jim Hewitt: *Blackbird Leys Community Worker*

Professor John Howson: *Education Consultant*

Penelope Hughes-Hallett: *Trustee, The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation*

Dr. Aidan Macfarlane: *Consultant in Public Health and Health Policy, Oxfordshire Health Authority; and Senior Clinical Lecturer in Paediatrics, Oxford University*

Neil McClelland: *Director, National Literacy Trust*

Professor Ruth Merttens: *Professor of Primary Maths at the University of St. John and St. Mark, Plymouth; director IMPACT Maths at the University of North London; Co-director of the Hamilton Maths and Reading Projects*

Dr Gillian Pugh OBE: *Chief Executive, Coram Family*

Teresa Smith: *Director, Department of Applied Social Studies and Social Research, Oxford University*

Professor Kathy Sylva: *Department of Educational Studies, Oxford University*

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY OBJECTIVES

This table shows how the PEEP programme relates to child development. *How* families receive PEEP is as important as *what* is in the programme; especially in relation to unconditional acceptance and valuing diversity . From birth, PEEP's particular contributions are in relation to children's learning, to speech and language development, and to identity and interaction leading to long-term mental health.

Child development objective (Sure Start)	PEEP programme (folders for 0s, 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s)	PEEP delivery and training
1. **Improving social and emotional development**	0s/2 - The very first language 0s/5 - Babies talking 0s/6 - Familiar sights, sounds and smells 0s/9 - Look what I can do 1s/5 - Playing with names 1s/8 - A sense of order 1s/9 - Play patterns 2s/1 - Helping children feel good about themselves 2s/2 - Living with television 2s/4 - Developing confidence through play 2s/5 - Living with tantrums 2s/7 - Managing difficult behaviour 3s/2 - Listening to children 3s/4 - Children's friendship 3s/8 - Things to talk about 4s/3 - Making a flying start at school 4s/9 - Real progress, real praise	• 'Unconditional positive regard' as basis of delivery • Focus on interaction • ORIM builds on achievements - positive not deficit model • Use of songs, rhymes, stories

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Child development objective (Sure Start)	PEEP programme (folders for 0s, 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s)	PEEP delivery and training
2. Improving health	0s/4 - Developing routines 1s/1 - Movement patterns	• Focus on observation of children • Diary pages promote awareness of healthy development, and doing things together
3. Improving children's ability to learn	0s/1 - Babies making choices 0s/3 - Books for babies 0s/7 - Helping babies to learn 0s/8 - Singing with babies 1s/2 - Toddler numbers 1s/3 - Play and learning 1s/4 - Amazing noises 1s/6 - Sharing books 1s/7 - How writing starts 2s/3 - Making the most of favourite stories 2s/6 - Let's count! 2s/8 - Making and playing with puppets 2s/9 - Home-made books 3s/1 - Helping children to learn 3s/3 - Numbers, numbers everywhere 3s/5 - Talking with children 3s/6 - Talking maths 3s/7 - Making the most of play patterns 3s/9 - What comes next 4s/1 - Learning about writing through play 4s/2 - Other worlds in books 4s/4 - Early writing 4s/5 - Sharing books with children 4s/6 - Helping children want to learn 4s/7 - Everyday writing 4s/8 - Playing with stories	• 'Learning culture' modelled by parents • Focus on high quality learning environment *in the home* • Interaction focus promotes language skills • Play and careful observation
Community objective (Sure Start)	**PEEP delivery and training**	
4. Strengthening families and communities	• Reduced isolation resulting from groups • PEEP evening training as 'learning bridge' • PEEP parents' progression to Sure Start involvement, LSAs, school governors etc • OCN accreditation generates confidence and supports applications to courses and jobs • Raised educational attainment creates pathways out of poverty	

PEEP Conference 2001

Summary Report

Literacy – birth to school

New practice, new evidence – new policy?

Friday 6 July 2001 – 10.00 am – 3.00 pm
Church House, Deans Yard, Westminster, London

"The key ..... we can no longer go on ignoring the years from birth to school age; at a policy level, at a practice level or at a research level."

Professor Christine Pascal

Speakers were:

Penelope Leach PhD *Principal Investigator, Family, Children and Child Care Study President, National Childminding Association*

Rosemary Roberts *National Director, Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP)*

Kathy Sylva *Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Oxford*
Maria Evangelou *Senior Researcher, Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford*

Naomi Eisenstadt *Head of Sure Start Unit, DfES*

Baroness Ashton *Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Early Years and School Standards*

Barry Sheerman MP *Chairman, Education Select Committee*

Professor Christine Pascal *Director, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, University College Worcester*

PEEP is enormously grateful to all the speakers for generously giving their time in preparing and delivering their presentations.

This very lively and over-subscribed conference covered key issues relating to new evidence, practice and policy in the early years sector. The focus was firmly on the birth-to-school period, with speakers examining current key issues and questions. Why is learning at home in the years from birth to school so important? What are the crucial issues for service providers? Is there new evidence to underpin policy development? What are the opportunities and challenges of the national context? What lessons are to be learned from new ways of working? What are the Government's recommendations in this field? What is the way forward?

Penelope Leach
"The importance of supporting parents with the youngest children"
Penelope Leach opened the conference with a rigorous and persuasive presentation on the importance of supporting parents with the youngest children.

"Mother (or sometimes father or carer) and baby form a 'dyadic system' in which both are active partners. It's the interaction between them that organises the baby's experiences .....

"Research that confirms the importance of secure attachment to at least one person – and preferably at least one spare for insurance purposes – is well-known. But it isn't yet widely understood that attachment is just as important to babies' cognitive as their emotional development. In fact those two cannot be separated.

"Babies don't need teaching – at birth or at 6 months – but they do need talk and song and laughter and books; and scaffolding to help them surmount each new self-imposed challenge."

Her conclusion was echoed by other speakers and delegates throughout the day:

"We simply can't afford to have that sense of not being good enough to be part of education, happen to parents or the other people who love, live alongside and care for babies and young children.

"Parents are children's educators; so much needed, and they are able to do so much good if only we can enable them to do it."

Rosemary Roberts
"Project development"
Continuing to emphasise the importance of parents and carers, Rosemary Roberts used an "iceberg" analogy to talk about four aspects of project development in PEEP, where much of the picture remains out of sight. The first of these was the location of babies, ones and twos in the UK. Currently, most support and development work for these children is made available through centres and daycare settings. But four-fifths of the time of children in this age group is spent in the home, and the great majority of them have little or no contact with settings. It follows that support needs to be offered to parents and carers about *life at home* if a significant difference is to be made.

Other "iceberg" issues were about being ready for school; about the PEEP project itself, what it is and how it can help; and about project development issues that have arisen from PEEP's first five years: the need for explicit rationales; and, for parents, service providers and government, the challenges inherent in holding appropriate expectations, including "the time it takes". PEEP songs linked the themes, together with some sparkling images of parents and children. During the breaks in the Conference the first two videos in PEEP's "Learning Together" series were shown: for Babies, and for Threes.

Professor Kathy Sylva and Dr. Maria Evangelou
"New Evidence: Birth to School Literacy Intervention"
In their presentation " New Evidence: Birth to School Literacy Intervention", Professor Sylva and Maria Evangelou began by exploring a range of evaluation strategies, using well-known examples such as the High/Scope Perry Pre-school study and the Bookstart intervention. Maria Evangelou described the evaluation methods she had used in her study of PEEP for Threes, and presented the results.

Looking at the impact of PEEP for Threes on children's literacy, numeracy and social-emotional development, she had found that significant gains in progress had been made. These gains were in the domains of verbal comprehension, vocabulary, concepts about print, phonological awareness, writing, early number concepts and self-esteem (maternal acceptance). She said that a follow-up assessment was being carried out, and the results would be available at the end of the year; and that the Birth to School Study on PEEP for all ages will report in 2002 – 2005.

Baroness Ashton

Speaking as the new Minister for Early Years and Childcare

Paying tribute to Margaret Hodge's work, Baroness Ashton reviewed the recent achievements of the government in expanding service provision for the early years. She emphasised the importance of laying strong foundations for learning, and of putting partnership with parents at the heart of government policy for early years education and care. Mentioning PEEP's role in the development of Sure Start, she made the link between families' access to services, and reducing poverty through improved access to work and out-of-work benefits. Acknowledging PEEP's contribution, Baroness Ashton concluded by stressing the need to "encourage early communications skills: skills that will be crucial to support literacy later on in school".

Naomi Eisenstadt

"Sure Start development and dissemination"

This was a thought-provoking account of the issues inherent in setting up this important new programme to reach four thousand children under four - a third of under fours living in poverty in the UK. Naomi Eisenstadt spoke of Sure Start's aims and key principles. She said that a really key issue is poverty, which creates barriers to learning and health. Further barriers to progress related to lack of transport, housing, and the time it takes for service providers to work in collaborative ways. Challenges are about achieving the balance between national coherence and local diversity; about being community-led while at the same time re-shaping the public sector; and about "joining up vertically" from central government ministers, through regional offices and development agencies, local government and tenants' associations to the end user. How can Sure Start "make sure that the messages from the experience at the bottom get right through to the top"?

Barry Sheerman

"Recommendations of the House of Commons Select Committee Report"

Barry Sheerman emphasised that in the production of this report the Select Committee had learned a great deal about the early years, both from their special advisers and from the good practice they saw. They had been impressed by the ability of some practitioners in getting through to mothers and fathers at an early stage, but Barry Sheerman asked *"What of the 0s – 3s? ..... 20% of their time at max is going to be spent in a setting, 80% of their time is going to be at home with their parents ..... We must get through there, to make sure that the importance of early years stimulation is there ..... Policy should be based on good research, good practice, and sharing what works".*

Strong themes that emerged from discussion groups

1. Raising self-esteem is a crucial part of this work.
2. How can we get better at involving fathers?
3. It is important to break down parents' isolation.
4. There needs to be more flexible use of funding, not straight-jacketed by criteria.
5. Children's play is vital.
6. Schools need to get better at welcoming parents.
7. What about the families whom we find especially hard to reach?
8. Who owns policy?
9. There is an urgent need for a nationally agreed protocol to tackle the difficult issues of confidentiality and data protection.
10. Different service providers (eg health visitors, teachers) think differently, use different 'language' in describing their work, and may have different priorities. How can these barriers be broken down so that service providers can work as one team?
11. Good communication is essential.
12. Time is the most important factor. This is very long-term work.

Professor Christine Pascal

"Summing up"

Professor Christine Pascal concluded the conference by bringing together the range of issues that had been most prominent during the conference. She had picked up four threads of thinking throughout the day.

First, we can no longer ignore the earliest years from birth to school age. The younger the children, the more crucial is their learning, and until now, the least support it has received. Professor Pascal stressed the importance of the learning environment of the family, and of always considering children's cognition in the context of their personal, social and emotional development.

Second, expansion of services for children and families is a priority that the government is clearly committed to continue.

Third, Professor Pascal mentioned a range of opportunities and challenges for practitioners in the current situation. She saw the opportunities as follows:

- The opportunity to develop a system of provision from birth.
- The opportunity to raise the status – and maybe the pay – for those who work in the sector.
- The opportunity to use new research evidence to make the case for investment in services.
- The opportunity to develop preventative work.
- The opportunity to learn about what works – from inspirational national and local projects - and to disseminate results in order to raise the level of practice.

Balancing these opportunities were the following challenges:

- The challenge, in spite of much progress, to "convince the unconvinced" of the importance of early childhood education and care.
- The challenge to reach those children and families that we are finding hard to reach, and tailor services to meet their needs.
- The challenge to work in sensitive and culturally appropriate ways.
- The challenge of recruiting, training and retaining the staff that are needed for the fast growing child care sector.
- The challenge of valuing children's early years in their own right, as well as a preparation for later life.
- The dangers of over professionalising the agenda for young children and families; putting pressure on parents and children; and – in our efforts to help - diminishing parents' confidence.
- The tension between the need to make things happen quickly, and the time it really takes to make a difference.

Finally, Professor Pascal highlighted the need for universal support services for *all* children and their families, from birth. She called this a "missing block" in the system, and emphasised the power of working together to put it in place.

Throughout the day there had been a 'magic box' for issues from delegates. We were left with challenging questions from a Sure Start Co-ordinator working within a Health Action Zone in the Midlands:

"To be successful, the Select Committee needs to consider the diversity of the childcare sectors, ie voluntary, private and statutory. The funding levels and sources of each sector are so diverse and unequal, how can equality and quality ever be achieved, without tackling the economic issue?

The recent Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative places the emphasis on the organisations becoming self-financing within 3 years, without any practical advice and support on how!

Good quality Early Learning costs but not all parents in the disadvantaged areas can afford this. Please can you explain how this conflicting situation can be resolved?"

Full conference report

A complete copy including all the slides is available, price £6 (inc p+p), from:
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